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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, our shelter from life's storms, give to the Members of this body a faith strong enough to face the tempest of our time. Strengthen them to confront with courage the challenges that come, knowing that Your purposes will prevail and that Your providence will sustain them.

Lord, help that this day with singleness of purpose and constancy of commitment, Your Senators will seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness, serving You with unfettered feet and following You with freedom and faith. Reign as sovereign Lord in this Chamber. Guide the deliberations, debates, and decisions of this day.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE.)

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, April 18, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1925, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, the Republicans the final 30 minutes. The filing deadline for first-degree amendments to the substitute amendment and the postal reform bill is 1 o'clock this afternoon.

### POSTAL REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I really hope we can work out an agreement on the postal reform bill. I spoke to Senator LIEBERMAN, the chairman of the committee, late last night, and he is hopeful, as I am, that we can move forward on this legislation. It is a shame if we cannot. As we speak, there are more than half a million men and women working for the Postal Service, and 25 percent of them are returning veterans. We have 30,000 post offices around the country. We have about 8 million people who depend on the post office for their jobs. So to think that we can't move forward on this would be really untoward. It is something we really need to get done. I am hopeful we can get that done. People can offer amendments, and we should do that as

quickly as possible and move forward on this legislation. If there is no agreement, we will have to vote on the substitute amendment tomorrow morning. I repeat, it would be too bad if we cannot get it done.

Enshrined in the Constitution by the Founding Fathers, the U.S. Postal Service has delivered this Nation's letters and other mail since the day of the quill pen and the inkwell. That is why we have inkwells here. That is what these are. I have paper clips in mine now, but originally that was the only way people who sat at these desks and did their work could write. Most of the time it was for mail.

Mail has been delivered through the years when stamps cost a nickel. Mail has been delivered through the years when mail traveled up and down America's waterways by steamship, and it has been delivered through two world wars when soldiers sent letters home to their sweethearts and families. Through it all, the U.S. Postal Service has been there to deliver the mail, rain or shine. But today America's postal system is in crisis.

We kind of use that as a throwaway, "through rain or shine." When I was a little boy, we had really bad snowstorms all over the West. In Searchlight, NV, we had a little snow a few times a year. But we had 3 feet of snow on the level. It was very, very bad.

I can remember a man named Con Hudgens. The mail came to Searchlight. There was a railroad that went through Nipton, CA, which was 22 miles from Searchlight. As that train sped through Nipton, they had an apparatus that would snatch the mail that was on the train. That mail was for Searchlight. They sorted it that way. This old man, Con Hudgens, walked through snow 22 miles to bring the mail. That is what we talk about when we say that mail has been delivered through rain or shine. That is the mantra of the post office.

But today America's postal system is in crisis. Today a personal note from a

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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